

A LETTER FROM THE PUBLISHER



There is no doubt that climate change is taking place and that human activity is a factor—so this potential global crisis requires a response, a coordinated one, from everyone. Governments cannot solve the crisis alone. We must tap into the resources available from private enterprise, in research, data, expertise, ideas, know-how, personnel, capital and leadership.

Every individual, wherever they live, can make personal choices that help to preserve the ozone layer, green cover, clean water, and consume less fossil fuel.

The United States is committed to doing its part to strengthen energy security and effectively address climate change. We are fully engaged in the United Nations effort to develop by next year an environmentally effective and economically sustainable post-2012 framework to address climate change. The United States is also working with our partners, including India, to reach consensus on this and to advance adoption and deployment of innovative technologies that will reduce or mitigate environmental damage.

Our cover package of articles on climate change in this issue of SPAN presents the urgency of the situation and specific appeals for global commitment and cooperation, made by former U.S. Vice President Al Gore, and R.K. Pachauri, chairman of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, during the Nobel Peace Prize ceremonies in December 2007. We've included a review by Arundhati Das of the Academy Award-winning documentary, *An Inconvenient Truth*, which is available for viewing at American Libraries in India. To spur discussion, we've offered the article "An Uncertain Truth," by Jesse Lichtenstein, who points out that there is much we still don't know about the rate and extent of climate change, and underscores the need for flexibility by decision-makers.

Americans are finding that public-private partnership is the key to finding solutions to environmental challenges. Innovations in operations, machinery, waste handling and new products are already being implemented by small businesses and major corporations in the United States and elsewhere. We've highlighted some of these in "Mimicking Mother Nature," by Andy Isaacson, and "New Technology Helps Alcoa Cut Greenhouse Gases," by Edmund F. Scherr. The world needs new ideas, and that means forward-looking opportunities in the job market, as Lisa A. Swenarski de Herrera details in "Careers in Climate Change." Along with the facts and figures, we hope you will have fun with the articles on choices that we all can make for the environment: paper or plastic bags, manual or automatic car transmissions, vegans or vegetarians.

We are grateful to artist Sujata Bajaj for her generosity in allowing SPAN to use her environmentally evocative mixed media work, "Fire," for our cover. A lovely work of art, like beautiful music, can stir the soul.